

Message Text

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APPROVED BY S THE SECRETARY

AF:WESCHAUFLE "

S/S - MR. BRIDGES

ACTION:JDELLENBACK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 257274

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL OF PEACE CORPS FROM ETHIOPIA

REF: A) STATE 246017; B) ADDIS 10770

, WE UNDERSTAND PROBLEM WITHDRAWAL OF PCVS POSES FOR YOU BUT FEEL WE CANNOT OPPOSE THIS DECISION, BASED AS IT IS PRIMARILY ON CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY OF THE VOLUNTEERS AND ON THE OTHER CRITERION OF VIABLE JOB POSITIONING.

2. IN ORDER TO LESSEN POSSIBLE ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THIS DECISION WE SUGGEST THAT THE EPMG BE INFORMED AT THE WORKING LEVEL IN MATTER-OF-FACT WAY. SUBJECT YOUR CONCURRENCE, PROPOSE POLITICAL COUNSELOR CALL ON DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS AT MOFA AND DELIVER FOLLOWING NOTE:
QUOTE - COMPLIMENTARY OPENING... AND HAS THE HONOR TO INFORM THE MINISTRY THAT THE PEACE CORPS HAS DECIDED TO WITHDRAW THE LAST VOLUNTEERS STILL IN ETHIOPIA, AT LEAST
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TEMPORARILY. THIS DECISION IS BASED ON CONCERN FOR THE

SAFETY OF VOLUNTEERS AND ON DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAVE

BEEN ENCOUNTERED IN PLACING THEM IN MEANINGFUL AND SATISFYING JOBS, WHICH ALSO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR MEANINGFUL CULTURAL INTERCHANGE. THE PEACE CORPS WILL BE PLEASED TO RESUME ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA WHEN MEANINGFUL

JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS MATERIALIZE, AND TO FACILITATE SUCH A RESUMPTION, THE PEACE CORPS PLANS TO MAINTAIN ITS OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING. UNQUOTE.

3. ORALLY THE COUNSELOR SHOULD DENY THAT THERE IS ANYTHING MORE TO THE DECISION THAN CONTAINED IN THE NOTE AND SHOULD ADD THAT HE IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO STATE THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT IN NO WAY ALTERS THE DETERMINATION OF THE USG TO WORK FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. HE SHOULD UNDERSCORE THE FACT THAT PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS IS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF THE VOLUNTEERS, AS WELL AS FOR VIABILITY OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT. HE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE PCHQ DECISION WAS TAKEN BEFORE THE RECENT ALLEGATIONS WERE MADE PUBLICLY ABOUT CIA INVOLVEMENT WITH DISSIDENT ELEMENTS. HE SHOULD ADD THAT SUCH UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS MADE BY PERSONS IN AUTHORITY, WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED BY IRRESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS AS A LICENSE FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICANS, CANNOT HELP BUT CONFIRM THE PEACE CORPS' SENSE OF INSECURITY OVER THE SAFETY OF VOLUNTEERS.

4. IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES YOU SHOULD STATE THAT PRESENT CONDITIONS IN ETHIOPIA ARE SUCH THAT IT HAS BECOME DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS TO PERFORM MEANINGFUL AND SATISFYING TASKS CONDUCIVE TO EFFECTIVE CULTURAL INTERCHANGE, BUT EMPHASIZE THAT THE PEACE CORPS WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN ITS OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE RAPID REINTRODUCTION OF VOLUNTEERS AT SUCH TIME AS CONDITIONS FOR THEIR EMPLOYMENT ARE MORE PROPITIOUS. KISSINGER

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